

Boosting

Story by Heike Hasenauer

Security

AS America prepared for war against Iraq, hundreds of military and civilian officials within the sprawling Department of Homeland Security sprang into high gear to protect the nation from anticipated retaliation.

Every security measure that had been in place after Sept. 11, 2001, was beefed up. Fighters patrolled the skies in greater numbers, and more frequently. The Coast Guard patrolled waterways and seaports with more vessels. And as the number of active-duty soldiers deployed to the Persian Gulf region continued to swell, so did the number of Army National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers activated in virtually every state to augment regular troops.

"Our very heartland is under attack, and all of us must be as ready as possible for the next strike," said U.S. Army, Pacific, deputy commander MG Craig B. Whelden, at Fort Shafter, Hawaii.

"In a sense, the efforts in the United States are more complex and uncertain than those faced by coalition forces now in the Persian Gulf region," he said. "We don't know where or when the next attack will occur."

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In Hawaii, 3,000 miles from any landmass, where support from the U.S. mainland would take five to seven hours, commanders must always be on guard. "This is a target-rich environment," said COL George Garrett, director of the office of the Joint Rear-Area Coordinator, Hawaii. The islands are home to the headquarters of both U.S. Pacific Command and U.S. Army Pacific, besides housing every branch of the military in very close proximity.

After the 2001 terrorist attacks the combatant commander, USPACOM, at Camp Smith, Hawaii, tasked USARPAC to be the executive agent for joint rear-area coordination, that is, homeland defense in Hawaii. The USARPAC commander thus became the JRAC, or joint rear-area coordinator.

Members of JRAC-HI, in partnership with the joint military services present in Hawaii and local, state and federal authorities, then developed a homeland defense preparedness plan, in the process basically revising a plan that had been in place for use in case of war on the Korean peninsula, Garrett said.

"When 911 hit, we received the ➤

An armed 41-foot utility boat from Coast Guard Station Honolulu escorts the USNS *Summer* out of Honolulu Harbor as part of stepped-up security in the port.

PA2 Lauren Smith, USCG



y in Hawaii





A gate guard at Schofield Barracks inspects SPC David Brault's ID card. Increased security at all military installations is a key feature of Hawaii's defense plan.

existing plan and reduced its scope to the Hawaiian Islands," he said. "The networking we'd done through our military support to civilian authorities allowed us to jump right into the 'run' phase of the Army's 'crawl, walk, run' training process. Most other states didn't have that luxury."

The defense plan for Hawaii includes protecting and restricting access to military installations by reducing entry points and using roving patrols, varying the procedures of guard forces to minimize the predictability of what they do, and maintaining regular contact with local law enforcement officials to receive regular intelligence reports, Whelden said.

Soon after it was established in October 2001, JRAC-HI identified mission-essential vulnerable areas, MEVAs, both on and off military installations. Local civil authorities have identified some 150 of their own MEVAs, Whelden said.

JRAC-HI also utilizes a defense-coordinating officer for providing military support to civil authorities following natural or man-made

disasters in Hawaii, American Samoa and neighboring islands.

The organization uses a number of tools to support its critical mission. Through an interactive computer system called ASOCC (for area security operations command and control), JRAC-HI personnel can monitor the activities and developing situations of friendly "forces," both military and civilian, Whelden said.

At the same time, the Pacific Mobile Emergency Radio System — a newly established, narrow-band frequency, land-mobile system — allows first-responders to communicate over a secure line with the military and each other. PACMERS is compatible with radio systems on aircraft and vessels, and can accom-

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modate as many as 149 "talk groups" on its network, Whelden said, with some of those groups dedicated to homeland security.

JRAC-HI boasts a round-the-clock joint intelligence-support element and counter-intelligence and law-enforcement coordination cell, and analyzes intelligence information and disseminates

it to those who need it, via secure Internet.

JRAC-HI has also developed a multi-agency training program, with worst possible case scenarios designed to exercise quick response, security awareness and military support to civilian authorities, Whelden said. To date, seven joint exercises have been conducted on the islands, some of them involving a mock plane crash or



Located at Pearl Harbor, Navy Environmental and Preventive Medicine Unit 6 provides specialized support to the Joint Rear Area Coordinator-Hawaii.



Marine Corps and Defense Department security forces team up to check traffic and personnel entering Pearl Harbor.

simulated car bomb.

The focused training program also includes quick-reaction-force exercises, key-leader discussions and “what-if” rock drills, Garrett said.

Within 30 days of Sept. 11, 2001, JRAC-HI, through coordination with state civil-defense authorities, also established a civilian version of the military force-protection-condition rating system for use in civilian communities in Hawaii. Tom Ridge, director of the Department of Homeland Security, used the color-coded system as a model for the national Security Alert System.

And JRAC-HI worked with local, state and federal officials to help establish Hawaii’s FBI-led Joint Terrorism Task Force, in 2002, and today feeds the JTTF intelligence information.

“What’s being done in Hawaii is a microcosm of what Ridge faced on a national scale,” Whelden said. “Hawaii has geographic advantages because of its isolation, affording tighter control

and access; a large military presence with a military combatant commander, all four armed services and the Coast Guard in close proximity; and all those forces are already accustomed to working together and with local, state and federal agencies.

“Just as important, however, is the

spirit of *ohana*, or family, that helps people in Hawaii transcend normal bureaucratic and cultural barriers,” Whelden added. “And because of the unique circumstances in Hawaii, we’re quite possibly ahead of the national effort in homeland security.” 📧

JRAC-HI People

THE JRAC-HI cell is composed of some 80 Reserve soldiers — about half of whom have been on active duty for two years as part of JRAC-HI, said USARPAC spokesman Joe Bonfiglio.

The Reserve soldiers left a range of civilian professions as varied as the missions they now perform, Bonfiglio said.

COL George Garrett, who is a former Honolulu police officer and current Defense Department training manager who retired from the military

with 35 years’ service, was recalled to active duty to become JRAC-HI’s director.

The current operations officer for the group, MAJ Ferman Cepeda, is a high school math teacher. Linguist-interrogator SSG Cecilia Corujo-Butler is a self-employed daycare provider and mother of three small children. And SFC Neoma Naaktgeboren, a counter-intelligence agent, is an art-gallery manager in civilian life. — *Heike Hasenauer*